

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P R 191030Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4302

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3171

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, EG, IS

SUBJECT: SYRIAN FONMIN SAVAGES NEW ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT

REF: DAMASCUS 3158 (NOTAL)

1. COMMENTED TO FONMIN KHADDAM AUG 18 I HAD FOUND ATTACK ON EGYPT BY PALESTINIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL CONCERNING PROSPECTIVE SINAI AGREEMENT EXCEPTIONALLY HARSH. (QUOTED FROM TEXT AS PUBLISHED IN BEIRUT PRESS.) KHADDAM REPLIED THAT SYRIAN FULLY IDENTIFIED ITSELF WITH PLO'S UNHAPPINESS ABOUT ACCORD AND SNAPPED, "DO YOU EXPECT US TO SWALLOW THE KNIFE YOU HAVE STUCK INTO US?" KHADDAM PREDICTED PLO WILL ESCALTE ITS OPPOSITION TO EGYPTIAN POLICY AND THAT USG POSITION IN AREA WILL SERIOUSLY DETERIORATE IF WE CONTINUE IGNORE PALESTINIANS.

2. KHADDAM TERSELY SUMMED UP RESULTS OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS AS:

- A. ISOLATION OF EGYPT IN ARAB WORLD,
- B. WEAKENING OF SADAT,
- C. THREE YEARS OF PARALYSIS AND,

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- D. THREE BILLION DOLLARS IN AMERICAN AID FOR ISRAEL.

HE DERIDED BENEFIT EGYPT WOULD GET FROM ABU RUDEIS OIL FIELDS SAYING THAT ANY ARAB COUNTRY WOULD HAVE MADE UP THIS AMOUNT BY GIFTS TWO OR THREE TIMES MORE VALUABLE. HE ASSERTED OTHER ARAB STATES FULLY SHARED DAMASCUS VIEWPOINT.

3. I CONTERED THAT KHADDAM WAS ONCE AGAIN IGNORING ISRAELI REACTIONS, TO US DIPLOMACY, AND DREW HIS ATTENTION TO NEWS REPORTS OF OBVIOUS UNEASINESS IN JERUSALEM CIRCLES ABOUT PROSPECTIVE ACCORD. ISRAEL WAS PAYING PRICE FOR THIS AGREEMENT. WE WERE CONVINCED NEW ACCORD WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO DESIRABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE IN AREA.

4. KHADDAM SCOFFED THAT ANY SUCH ISRAELI PROTEST ABOUT ACCORD WAS MERE FLUFF TO GET US MORE FULLY ON ISRAELI SIDE. HE THEN TURNED TO DISCUSSION SYRIAN CAMPAGN EXPEL ISRAEL FROM UN. IMPLIED THAT PROSPECT OF NEW ISRAELI/EGYPTIAN ACCORD HAD CONFIRMED SARG IN ITS DETERMINATION PUSH ITS CAMPAIGN FORWARD AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE (SEPTE L).

5. COMMENT: FONMIN'S VIVID EXPRESSIONS OF UNHAPPINESS ONCE AGAIN DO NOT REFLECT COMPLEX AND AMBIVALENT SYRIAN POLICY TOWARDS NEW ACCORD (REFTEL). FOR EXAMPLE, SARG SEVERELY CENSORED PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL'S COMMUNIQUE FOR USE IN LOCAL MEDIA, ITS CENTRAL SECTION ATTACKING EGYPT.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC03171
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750293-0441
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750837/aaaabftu.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 DAMASCUS 3158
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN FONMIN SAVAGES NEW ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT
TAGS: PFOR, SY, EG, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006